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The Review of Religions

Edited by A. Q. NIAZ, B.A.

XXVIII, No. 1

January, 1939

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Reviews

The Review of Religions is an organ of the Ahmadiyy Movement in Islam. It is open to all for discussing problen connected with the religious and spiritual growth of man, b it does not accept responsibility for views expressed t contributors.

QADIAN
njab : India

ارادی

جان اسٹورٹ مل کی کتاب لبرٹی کا صحیح اور بامحاورہ ترجمہ جو سیاسیات کے درس کا ایک اہم جزو ہے۔ مل انگلستان کے ان ارباب فکر میں سے ہے جس نے اپنی بلند خیالی اور زور قلم سے یورپ کے اہل فکر میں اپنا لوہا منوالیا۔

مترجمہ

جناب سعید انصاری صاحب ایم، اے (کولمبیا)

مقدمہ از پروفیسر محمد مجیب صاحب بی، اے (آکسن)

قیمت عہ

مکتبہ جامعہ دہلی

معاہدہ عمرانی

از ژاں ژاک رُوسو

مترجمہ ڈاکٹر محمود حسین خاں صاحب ایم۔ اے پی ایچ۔ ڈی

حریت، اخوت اور مساوات جس کا روحانی پیام دنیا کو اسلام نے پہنچایا تھا اس کی سیاسی تبلیغ یورپ میں روسو کے معاہدۂ عمرانی نے کی، روسو کا کمال یہ ہے کہ اس نے سیاست مدن کے دقیق مسائل باتوں باتوں میں سمجھا دئے ہیں۔ اس کی یہ کتاب جو معنوی حیثیت سے فلسفہ سیاست کی سب سے اہم کتاب ہے زبان اور طرز بیان کے لحاظ سے سب سے سہل ہے۔ قیمت عہ

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The

Review of Religions

Vol. XXXVIII JANUARY 1939 No. 1

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نحمدہٗ ونصلی علیٰ رسولہ الکریم

ME'RAJ AND ISRA*

Me'raj and Isra are two words applied to two incidents in the Holy Prophet's life which took place about the time we have now under review. These are two journeys which the Holy Prophet undertook under Divine Commands, having been guided by Gabriel to his destination—Sma in one case, and Jerusalem in the other, respectively. The word Sma in Arabic is used for things standing on high, over other things, one meaning in which it is used being the sky or the firmament.

Me'raj and Isra both occupy considerable space in Islamic theological discussions from a little after the demise of the Holy Prophet right up to this day. We learn from Muslim Scriptures and from historical sources that each of these journeys was completed in the course of one night; the commentaries and other discourses on theological subjects abound in wealth of detail; but quite a number of popular ideas, generally accepted by the masses in this connection, are unwarranted by the text.

*Translated from *Sirat-i-Khatmun-Nabiyyeen* by Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad, M.A.

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so that he should witness Our signs; indeed, He is the Hearing and the Seeing." .. This was the time when we said to thee, O Our Messenger! Thy Lord had encompassed the people: and the vision, which we vouchsafed to thee was a trial for the people ".[1]

Gist of the Reports Occurring in Hadith

One night the Angel of the Lord appeared unto the Holy Prophet, bringing with him a beautiful animal bigger than a donkey but somewhat smaller than a mule, pure white and long of body. He made the Holy Prophet ride on it, and started for Jerusalem. The stride of this animal was so swift and so long that with each step he seemed to reach the outermost bound of the horizon. On arriving in Jerusalem the Holy Prophet went into the Temple where all the earlier Prophets were assembled, the names of Hazrat Ibrahim, Moses and Jesus are specially mentioned. Here the Holy Prophet offered his prayers, conducting the service, and the other Prophets following him. Then Gabriel presented two cups before him, one containing milk and the other wine, out of which the Holy Prophet accepted the one containing milk and rejected the other. Thereat Gabriel remarked: "You have indeed perceived the true nature of man and acted in accordance with it: had you taken the cup of wine your followers would have gone astray."

Following some other versions the gist would be somewhat like this: when Gabriel appeared before the Holy Prophet bringing the Buraq with him, that animal shied a little and became restive when the Holy Prophet was about to mount, whereupon Gabriel exclaimed: "Be quiet, Buraq! be quiet, for, indeed, there is no one so exalted in rank as the personage who is going to ride on you". The Buraq then quieted down at once and the Holy Prophet got on its back, starting for Jerusalem accompanied by Gabriel.

1. *Sura Bani Israil, rukus 1 and 6.*

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On the way they met an old woman who asked Gabriel who his companion was, but Gabriel ignored her question only saying to the Holy Prophet: "Please proceed on, Please proceed on." Not long after this a voice was heard from one side saying: "Mohammad come this way." But Gabriel again urged the Holy Prophet not to heed it and to press on. Thus they had gone some distance when they came across a party of men who greeted the Holy Prophet saying: "Thou who art the First, peace be upon you; thou who art the Last, peace be upon you; thou who art the Collector, peace be upon you." In this case Gabriel asked the Holy Prophet to return greetings to these men, and the two pressed on their way. They had not gone far when they were met again by the same party of men who, as before, called out their greetings, the Holy Prophet greeting them in return. After going some more distance the party appeared a third time, greetings being exchanged as on the two previous occasions. Then the Holy Prophet reached Jerusalem where Gabriel presented three cups before him, one full of water, the second containing wine, and the third milk. Out of these the Holy Prophet accepted the cup of milk and declined the other two, whereupon Gabriel remarked: "You have acted in accordance with the true nature of man. Had you accepted water, your followers would have been drowned; and had you accepted wine, your followers would have gone astray." After this all the previous Prophets appeared there, all saying their prayers in the Sacred Temple in congregation, the Holy Prophet conducting the service. Gabriel then informed the Holy Prophet that the old woman they had met on the way represented this world, of which the remaining span of life was like that of an old person; and that the voice which had tried to call him aside was the voice of Shaitān (evil and injurious things) who had sought to divert his attention from the right path; and that the men whom they had met thrice were Hazrat Ibrahim, Hazrat Musa (Moses) and Jesus. After this the Holy Prophet returned to Mecca.

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Interpretation and Significance of Me'raj and Isra

These are the incidents recorded in connection with the Me'raj and the Isra. Pondering well over them we are not left in any doubt with regard to their significance, especially when we take into consideration their peculiar nature which speaks plainly that they do not belong to the world of material and physical perceptions. Being of the nature of spiritual vision and experience, their interpretation is this that they are intended to point to the exalted rank of the Holy Prophet, and the important position which his followers were soon to occupy in the affairs of this world. For, among other hints to this effect, the Holy prophet reaching higher up and leaving all the earlier Prophets behind, and being given the position of leader among them at the time of prayers—these things indubitably point to the above conclusion. Another noteworthy circumstance is that some of the earlier prophets are specially mentioned as having met the Holy Prophet, the point in it being that they are those with whom the Holy Prophet had special connection in point of ancestry; or they are those with whose followers Islam had to deal for the most part in the course of its rise; or those who are noted for some special characteristic, in which case the significance is that even in that particular respect the Holy Prophet excelled them. From the point of view of ancestry these names are those of Hazrat .Adam and Hazrat Ibrahim; from the standpoint of Islam having had to deal with their followers, we have Hazrat Musa and Hazrat Isa, the latter being the central point in Christianity, and the former being the teacher of an excellent religious law which, after its purpose was served, was replaced by Islam, which it resembled closely. The names, used by these Prophets in their greetings to the Holy Prophet (*i.e.*, the First, the Last and the Collector), have a similar significance, pointing to the Holy Prophet's greatness, the name Collector having reference to the fact that prior to the advent of the Holy Prophet separate Prophets were

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sent to separate groups of humanity, the mission of none before him having been Universal, but the teachings of Islam being meant for all mankind, the Holy Prophet became the means of collecting the whole human race round one centre.

Further, it should be borne in mind that, apart from the general and collective interpretation, of which we have suggested some points, the Me'raj and the Isra have each a separate and distinctive significance, which is that Me'raj indicates the spiritual excellence and pre-eminence of the Holy Prophet and his rise in nearness to Almighty God; while Isra points to his temporal splendour and the importance which Islam was soon destined to assume. The destination in Me'raj is the Sma, meaning the firmament, the heavens, the upper regions: in Isra the destination is a place upon this earth. In the case of Me'raj, again, the Holy Prophet's ascent upwards was accomplished independently of material means, signifying that his spiritual flight upward would be through Divine Grace manifesting itself without an intermediary. In Isra the Holy Prophet journeyed mounted on the Buraq, which meant to say that the temporal might of Islam would be brought about apparently through the agency of material means, while the extraordinarily swift pace of the mount implied that the progress would be so astounding as to have no parallel in history—prophecies which found literal fulfilment soon afterwards.

Isra took place at night, and night, in figurative language, means time of distress, difficulties and tribulations. The meaning implied from this point of view is that though Islam was at the time face to face with insurmountable difficulties, it would sweep them all aside very soon and establish itself in an unassailable position. The significance of the destination in Isra being Jerusalem was to draw the attention of the Holy Prophet, and through him of every body concerned, that, whereas up till now Islam had been mainly concerned with the ancient culture

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of pagan Arabia, it would soon have to deal with Christianity and Judaism, Jerusalem being the centre of both. And so it indeed turned out to be. As soon as the Migration to Medina had taken place, Islam came in political and spiritual conflict with both these religions in a frontal clash with the Jews of Medina, and a little later with Christianity in the form of the Eastern Roman Empire.

Date of Me'raj and Isra

With regard to the date of Me'raj and Isra there is some difference of opinion among historians, but the general consensus is in favour of the view that both took place towards the eve of the Migration to Medina. Bokhari, too, who ranks foremost in point of reliability, is of the same opinion.* It therefore appears to be safe to say that the Me'raj and Isra took place about one year before the Migration to Medina, *i.e.*, somewhere in the 12th or 13th year of the Holy Prophet's Ministry. About Isra, in any case, there is conclusive evidence that it took place about the time above mentioned, though Me'raj might possibly have occurred a little earlier.

* Bokhari, *Kitab bad-ul-Khalq.*

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PROPHET MOHAMMAD AS A TEACHER

Below is the text of a speech delivered at the Prophet's Day meeting in Peshawar City by Mehta Siri Ram Bhimwal, M.A., B.T., Professor of English, Edward's College, Peshawar.

[These meetings, planned by Amirul Momenin Hazrat Khalifatul Masih II, Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement, and organised to be held every year, are intended to counteract the scurrilous propaganda against Islam and its Holy Founder which, in India, is the chief cause of Hindu-Muslim strained relations. On the occasion of these meetings every year, in addition to lectures and addresses by Muslims, non-Muslim scholars too are invited to express their views on the life and character of the Holy Prophet—*Editor.*]

It was Wordsworth who when speaking of a Skylark called that bird,

"Type of the wise who soar, but never roam,
True to the kindred points of heaven and home!"

The same poet has another verse regarding Milton

"Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart,
The lowliest duties on herself did lay."

I have had to read these verses with my students more than once and I may be guilty of reading into them a meaning, or associating with them ideas which the poet never had in his mind, but one thing is clear. Whenever I have tried to visualise the type of the wise who soar, but never roam, when I have tried to see for myself the kindred points of heaven and home

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and when I have sought to imagine those who moved about this world in cheerful godliness, yet their hearts did not shirk even the lowliest duties of life I have always thought of Prophet Mohammad as a most helpful example. Then there is another, rather hackneyed but pregnant saying that example is better than precept and experience is best. These few days that I have been thinking of the Holy Prophet as a teacher, time and again, these words have come to my mind: "Example is better than precept and experience is best". It is in the light of these that I shall invite you to consider the life and work of the Prophet of Arabia as a teacher with me today.

The first and the lowest is "precept". It is hardly necessary for me to dilate on all the various teachings of the Prophet, touching as they do the manifold aspects of human life. I shall speak briefly of the great emphasis that he placed on the unity, oneness and all-pervading character of God. God is one. He alone is worthy of adoration, and adoration is what He demands of those whom He has created and gifted with qualities like reason and imagination. God knows even the innermost secrets of our hearts and whereas He creates and sustains us, He shall also judge us when the time comes for that. The tiny leaves of a tree move but as He bids them move. Grave is not the end of our lives There is a great Hereafter. Let life be a preparation for that. The preparation does not lie in unqualified asceticism and torture of the body but lies in fearing and loving God, in seeing and worshipping Him in His creation, in imbuing ourselves with His attributes of loving self-sacrifice, truth, charity, justice and forgiveness. A true believer will regard every other believer in this one and Supreme God as his brother. Accordingly we find that brotherhood of all Muslims is an important distinguishing feature of the creed preached by the Holy Prophet. Men are all equal in the sight of God. It is not their rank and birth that will help them on the Day of Judgment but their actions. The mere fact that one professed the Muslim Faith did not make one a

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Muslim. Living and transforming faith in God alone did that. So deep and intense was the consciousness of the all-prevading character of God with Prophet Mohammad that when a guest came to him he felt as if the blessing of God had visited him. Hence the emphasis he placed on hospitality as a virtue to be cultivated and the high place that a loving and cheerful host occupied in the eyes of God. Women were to get their rightful share in life, children were to be loved most tenderly and slaves were to be treated very considerately. Knowledge was to be pursued, but in all this the thing that never was to be lost sight of was that God was the giver of all life. He had a future in store for us and those who cared for that future, which can be blissful, would do well to forego the comforts of this life, for after all the foremost duty of a true Muslim was to do the commands of God, to have His name constantly on his tongue and to preach His message to erring humanity.

I think I have said enough regarding the teachings of the Holy Prophet for a brief article like the present. Let me now turn to his example—the domain in which he excels, the thing which, to a large extent, constitutes the secret of the extraordinary success he achieved. "His morals are the Quran", said Aesha, his wife; and it is perfectly true, for there is not a single Quranic teaching which he did not exemplify in his life.

First of all let us take his love of God and his faith in Him and in a great Hereafter. He preached that it was of the utmost importance that men imbued themselves with divine qualities. "My case" he once observed, "is like that of a mounted wayfarer who pauses at noon under the shade of a tree, just to rest for a while, and then proceeds on his way". The world was to him just a temporary abode, and though he enjoyed honey, liked perfumes and had a most delicate regard for his wives and children, though he was not an acestic in the sense that he lived under a more or less perpetual vow of celibacy or physical torture, yet his whole life is marked by a simplicity that borders on

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austerity. The virtual overlord of Arabia had for his bedding only a mattress, and the blanket in which he used to wrap himself was folded and spread under him whenever he sat. His household furniture was of the simplest and the divine injunction regarding his wives was clear that they could remain in the Prophet's household only if they turned their backs on the joys and comforts of this world. His whole life, in short, was an example of how men ought to prepare for the life to come. With the name of God constantly on his tongue the Prophet moved amongst his friends and foes as an embodiment of truth, charity, justice, cleanliness, hospitality and forgiveness. Long before the call came to him to play the Prophet, he was known as "Al-Amin", the trustworthy. Even his bitterest foes never challenged his honesty of purpose. As a matter of fact it was his sparkling honesty and pure and chaste life on account of which Khadija, his wife, felt convinced that the call to prophethood was genuine, and helped him on his way with all the help and encouragement she was capable of. The very fact that the Prophet felt so nervous when he received the call helps one to see the sort of man he must have been. Of his charity and hospitality I shall only say that he was never known to turn a beggar from his door. He was one of those who not only believed but also lived in the spirit of giving away the last farthing. Very often he and his wives had nothing left for themselves, and if a guest turned up in this state of poverty the Prophet instead of saying no to him would wait, hoping all the time that something might still turn up. Glorious life, isn't it? His hospitality proved most infectious, and only those who refuse to see things with their eyes open will accuse me of flattery and exaggeration when I say that so far as this particular virtue is concerned Muslims not only of the days of the Prophet but also Muslims of today can, to say the least of it, challenge comparison with any other people of the world. Sweet as the Prophet was to all those who came to partake of the comforts of his home, in his treatment of them he never lost sight of their rank and status in life. Because the spirit behind it all was

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right, because he, the highest of them all, never placed himself on a higher pedestal in his dealings with them, and because regarding himself just as a brother in a vast brotherhood, he would visit the homes of even the lowliest of his followers and sit and chat with them and partake of their food, even to this day, though the sight of a Muslim master and his servant saying their "Namaz" together is by no means uncommon, we find that the servant never forgets himself before his master and the poor tenant seldom ignores the higher social privileges of his landlord. If there are those who cannot understand this, that is because the spirit that has animated their life and culture is different.

Turning now to the qualities like justice and forgiveness that we find in God and that we ought to see developed in our own lives, we find that the Prophet was held in such high regard as a just person even by the non-Muslims that at Medina, the idolaters and the Jews accepted him as their arbitrator. Cases are not unknown where, when he had to judge between a Jew and a Muslim, he decreed in favour of the former. This, incidentally, should help us to imagine both his great love of justice and his tremendous moral courage. In these days of democracy when people would perhaps do anything to keep their voters together, the sight of the Prophet risking the help and support of a whole newly converted tribe by a single judgment—and that just for the sake of truth and justice—should be instructive and inspiring indeed. One can, after this, understand the man who said, "Should Fatima, daughter of Muhammad, commit theft, I would certainly cut off her hands". He came to preach God and Justice. His aim was not to compass worldly ends.

I spoke also of his forgiveness. To illustrate that he lived upto the Quranic teaching. In this respect, I would refer to the treatment he meted out to the Meccans on his conquest of that City. People who had done their utmost to uproot Islam and who had inflicted unspeakable tortures on his followers were pardoned

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One mistake which some Muslims have made, as well as the majority of non-Muslim Historians, is that they have taken Me'raj and Isra to be two names used for one and the self-same incident, whereas from the Holy Quran, which makes mention of both these journeys, it is clear that Me'raj and Isra are two separate incidents which, though connected with each other by virtue of their spiritual significance and purpose, yet took place on different occasions. Me'raj is the name applied to that spiritual journey in which the Holy Prophet was taken up from Mecca into the heavens where, so to say, he presented himself before Almighty God; and Isra is the name of the journey in which the Holy Prophet was taken to the Sacred Temple in Jerusalem. The Quran mentions the two journeys, each in a separate chapter, giving different particulars in the two cases, pointing clearly thereby to the fact that Me'raj and Isra are not two names used for the same journey but each a separate name for a separate event. Me'raj is mentioned in the Quran in the course of the chapter entitled Surah Najm,[1] while a description of Isra is to be met with in the chapter entitled Surah Bani Israil.[2] In Surah Najm for instance, where some particulars of Me'raj are given, no mention is made of Jerusalem; while in Surah Bani Israil, where Isra is described, the word Sma (the destination in Me'raj) is nowhere to be met with.

Similarly, a careful study of Hadith, too, brings out the same point—that Me'raj and Isra speak of two different incidents. Bokhari, which unquestionably is the most authentic work, treats Me'raj and Isra under the two different chapters, which fact signifies that the compiler of the work did not take the two names to be applicable to the same journey. In the case of Me'raj, moreover, the Holy Prophet is reported to have been taken up from Mecca into the heavens, while in the

1. *Sura Najm, ruku 1.*
2. *Sura Bani Israil, ruku 1.*

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most generously. If I mistake not, some of his Medina followers felt jealous of that, but look at the grand result achieved—the change of hearts it brought about. Not only were the Meccans converted, the whole of Arabia bowed before the truth and power of Islam. One who, when called upon to curse his enemies, could say in reply, "I have not been sent as a curse to mankind, but as an inviter to good and as a mercy. O Lord! grant guidance to my people; for surely they know not", must have appeared as something superhuman to those who were privileged to live with him. No wonder that even on his death-bed, with practically the last breath of his nostrils, he warned his followers of that fatal danger of raising their saints and Prophets into so many deities.

By now we should be in a position to appreciate the truth of his wife's testimony, "His morals are the Quran"; lofty precepts backed by an example loftier still. But we shall fail to understand both these in all their fulness if we are inclined to ignore, however slightly, that Prophet Muhammad spoke and derived sustenance from a deep, living and constant experience of God. The heart and the eye are gross and untrained in the perception and enjoyment of things refined and spiritual if the material world, with all its allurements, looks more real and enticing than the one of which it is but a shadow. As a Bengali poet puts it:

"'Tis not that in our tears
Some happier life we crave;
Our happiest, sweetest years
Mysterious moments have:
The sense of our brief human lot
Clings to us, haunts our thought.
Oh! then this pleasant earth
Seems but an alien thing;
Faint grows her busy mirth;
For some enduring home we cry!
She cannot satisfy,
Or bind us: only ties
Immortal found can bless";

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Study a life like the life of the Prophet. You can not but feel that the ties immortal found were his; that even while a creature of this earth he lived more often in that 'enduring home' which she cannot provide; that he spoke with angels and talked with God and they were nearer to him than his nearest human friends. His words that God is nearer to us than our own heart pulsated with life and came from an experience most living and direct. It is this experience that constituted the beauty, the power and the glory of his life. He has been called, and rightly so, as one of the finest statesmen the world has produced. But would you base his claim to greatness on his statesmanship shorn of his experience of God? I, for one, should feel miserable to do that. Experience of things divine made him great. That is what would make others great. And it is on this note of experience, on the possibility of our uniting heaven and home even as earthly mortals, that I take leave of you.

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THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT—(*Concluded*).

Now let me come more to the religious aspect of the Community—again, not on the doctrinal side but on the practical aspect.

We are, I was going to say, and could quite truthfully have said, the only—but having regard to certain sentiments I shall say we are the principal and by far the most active interpreters of Islam to the world today, and that is our main function,—in the form of literature that is issued from the Centre; in the form of missions that have been established. In addition, every adult member of the Community, wherever he may be, counts himself as first a missionary of Islam and next as sometning else—not that, if certain functions are laid on him, he would neglect them, but nothing pleases him more than the opportunity to interpret Islam in words or actions or by his mode of life.

Again, those of you who know how small the Community is at this time, though it is growing fast having regard to its numbers, would be surprised at its activity in this direction. We have a well established centre for missionary activity here in London. We have small but a growing and very active community in Budapest. We have a certain number in Warsaw; two or three at least—I think there are more—in Rome; we have some in Sapin; we have flourishing communities in, I think, over twenty-five towns of the United States of America. We have fairly substantial communities in West Africa. There are, of course, large communities all over India, and small ones in East Africa, South Africa, and other places. This is a great effort and a successful effort. Here again, as I say, we have undertaken to place before the world the teachings of Islam with regard to all aspects of life—the fundamental teachings of Islam as contained in the Quran—

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and to interpret them to the world. And we find that the world is thirsty for them, not only that they are not unacceptable, but that, when they are explained, it is perfectly easy to persuade people to grasp them. The difficulty comes when people are asked to adapt or adjust their lives in accordance with them. It is the social difficulty more than the intellectual difficulty, because whatever becomes familiar by association or habit is extremely difficult to give up.

Let me give an instance which will illustrate some of the remarks I have made about Islam laying down the fundamentals which we have to place before the world with regard to aspects of human life. I have already referred to the religious side. We believe, as I have said before, both as a matter of belief and doctrine and many of us by experience—my mother, for instance, is one of them and there are a large number among us—that we can have communion between man and his Creator. That is what I have said on the religious side, and it is a great thing if you can realise it, if you can really believe that that is possible. It is the greatest experience that any human being can have. We stand for that on the religious side.

Let me illustrate how Islam seeks to govern the other aspects of people's lives, and what sort of thing we offer to the world today as being part of Islamic teachings. Take a purely secular subject—the economic conception of society in Islam. That is a vast subject. You would not expect me to go into details, but let me touch upon some of the fundamentals.

As I have had to explain on previous occasions to London audiences, first we must realise what the object of Islam is. It is to have a society where wealth circulates in every section of it; where there are no vested interests and, though some people may become extremely wealthy, the real object is that wealth should be distributed equitably as broadly in society as possible. As a result of one of my addresses on this

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subject it was conveyed to me on behalf of, and subsequently directly by a millionaire here, that people like him had no place in the economic structure of society. And I said it did not surprise me, and perhaps Islam had no use for people like that.

Under the Islamic Law of inheritance a man may do whatever he likes with his property during his lifetime; he is perfectly free in the matter, the security being that he must cut off his own enjoyment in any disposition of property he makes. But when it comes to disposition by will, the Islamic doctrine is very different from most doctrines, though it is somewhat in accord with the Scottish. It is this: that a man may dispose of one-third of his property by will for any objects that he likes, but two-thirds must go by compulsion to his heirs, of which there is a very large body. Each son has a certain share, each daughter has a certain share, the widow has her share, the father and mother, if they are alive; and if there are no children, then brothers and sisters, and so on. So that the inheritance of a man is distributed over a very large number, and the share of no heir can exceed a fixed proportion.

The next provision which is made against the accumulation of wealth within a few hands is the prohibition against usury. Islam prohibits the loan of money or commodities under an obligation where the debtor is bound to repay the loan plus so much, either a percentage or a fixed amount, for the use of it. There are other ways of helping each other. For instance, in an ordinary debt we should not expect any return for it in any shape or form over and above the exact amount loaned; or at the most you can have a mortgage with possession. But even there, interest must not come in. If a thing is mortgaged, well then the mortgagee is entitled to the use of it, or to get such profit out of it as he can. But for that he cannot get anything from the mortgager. And trading partnerships are permitted. But fixed return in loans is prohibited, and that is another thing which

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militates against the accumulation of wealth in a few hands.

Then we have the institution of Zakat that is based on this principle that in the production of wealth it is not only capital and labour that take part but also, and to a very large extent, the gifts of Providence to the whole community. Wealth and all it consists of, and all the influences to which it is subject, these are the gifts of Providence to the whole of humanity. So according to the Islamic system, not only among those who contribute capital, not only among those who contribute labour, but also the share of humanity has to be returned for the State to administer in accordance with certain principles laid down. So unless you pay out that share you have not really distributed the wealth you have produced to all the factors responsible for its production. And that must be administered, not as an ordinary tax payable to the Government, but there are commissioners appointed who will devote it to its purpose, mainly the relief of distress, the encouragement of research in scientific subjects, the maintenance of schools, and so on. And it is imposed not merely on income but in certain cases on capital. 2½% is the usual rate, though it varies.

Zakat, if properly levied, is a huge fund at the disposal of the Community, not so much to rectify the distribution of wealth, as to obtain for such people as would not otherwise be able to obtain it, equal opportunities of profits and the basic necessities of life.

Then most of you will be surprised to hear there is a universal system of insurance in Islam which does not require any Insurance Societies. In British India, at any rate, it is being given effect to, though it is resorted to very seldom. It is this: If *A* were to die today, *B*, *C* and *D* would become the heirs to any property and would divide it amongst themselves. Good. Then supposing *A* falls into indigence and he, through no fault of his own, is unable to make a living

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(supposing he has become the victim of an accident) in Islamic Society all he has got to do is to go to a magistrate and make an application stating the facts and asking that notice may be issued to those who would be his heirs if he died today, to show cause why they should not contribute to his maintenance in the proportions in which they would benefit if he died and left an inheritance. It becomes a sort of universal insurance.

And there are many other instances. I was just giving this as an illustration to show that Islam has laid down certain principles which I am afraid have become buried and overlaid in huge commentaries which have addressed themselves to abstruse doctrinal questions and other matters that arise in the course of centuries. But here are things laid down by Islam for the construction of a healthy society.

Then there are injunctions given in regard to peace and war. I once read a paper setting out the teachings of Islam with regard to international relations, or the relations between sovereign and subject, between master and servant, and all that. These things are fully set out in the Quran. And we are seeking, as I said, to bring out this revolution that we want Muslim society again to be based upon these principles. When we have a living model to show to the people we would then dispense with having to explain to different audiences what Islam stands for. They would only have to look at any individual Muslim to find out what Islam teaches, or to any group or community to find what Islam teaches as to life in the community, or to look at a whole country, or nation and find out what Islam teaches with regard to national principles and, if there were more than one State, to find out what international principles Islam teaches.

This is what Islam stands for in its organisation.

At the head of the Community we have a person who, I can say without fear of contradiction, certainly

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in India, is, even on secular matters, the best read and the best informed man you could select. Most people when they hear of a religious leader run away with the idea that this is a man who must be immersed in knowing the barren controversy of religious doctrine. Nothing of the kind.

Again, people say of all religious communities that they are set up because it is a means of bringing income to the Head of the Community.

The Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement receives not a penny as compensation or allowance from the Community or anyone else. He happens to be a man who has modest private means of his own and he not only lives on those but makes contribution towards the various objects of the Community just as much as anyone else. He possesses many qualities which not only entitle him to our reverence, but many qualities which compel us to give him our fullest allegiance, our fullest affection, our fullest devotion. He was able to visit England in 1924, and those with whom he came into contact have formed some idea of his personality; and we are absolutely certain that every effort of the Community is directed into useful channels, that every effort of the Community will produce results, and is producing results today. Every penny we contribute towards the funds of the Community is made to yield the value of a shilling. Every penny that we spend does some good, towards either relieving pain, or bringing light and happiness to some section of the Community.

That is a great satisfaction.

On the other hand, there is a bigger satisfaction. That is that our lives and the way in which we are asked to spend them, every moment of them, they are bent towards useful and beneficent purposes of service, and once we realise that, it makes life worth living; it makes every sacrifice that we may be called upon to make a source of joy and happiness; every pain that

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we might suffer, turns into joy. That is the great joy in belonging to a movement of this kind—to feel that every moment of our life is well worth living, and you are spending it in the service of humanity, and, if not today, then tomorrow or the day after, humanity will receive the benefit and we will get nearer and nearer to each other in good-will, peace and satisfaction, and one day humanity will be resorted to the enjoyment of peace and happiness and dignity.

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INTER-COMMUNAL AMITY IN INDIA*

FRIENDS AND COUNTRYMEN,

I owe you my formal thanks for thrusting upon me the honour of presiding over today's deliberations on the Life and Teachings of the Prophet under the auspices of the enlightened Ahmadiyya Mission. I am here on the Presidential chair, I may say, like the great Abu Bakr, not because, I am the best among you but because it has been your pleasure to honour me with the office. It shows extraordinary courage and self-confidence on the part of the Ahmadiyya Community in Decca to invite a rather sceptical student of history, and that too of an alien faith, to speak on the Prophet of Islam not in the communal or national but international and universal aspect.

Whatever our personal religions may be, we students of history, steer clear of God or gods, incarnations and prophets of the past, and do not pass any judgment on current affairs; because clear waters of truth beneath the froth and foam of advocacy and prejudice remain hidden from the eyes of contemporaries. One weakness of enthusiasts of every creed is an attempt to force history to give a judgment in favour of their own creed against all others, but they forget that History is a double edged sword which may cut the hand that weilds it for partisan warfare. It is said that one of the Mughal Emperors once cornered a Hindu *baniya* with the question, "which religion is true?" The *baniya* cleverly extricated himself by telling the Emperor a parable of a shrewd old man who possessed one genuine precious stone on

*Text of Presidential Address by Dr. Kalika Ranjan Qanango, M.A., Ph.D., Head of the Department of History, Decca University, delivered on the occasion of last Inter-Cummunal Amity Conference held on the 11th December, 1938, in the Jagannath College Hall, Decca.

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case of Isra, too, the Journey begins from Mecca with Jerusalem as its destination.[1]

Further, the fact is not without significance that though the report concerning Me'raj occurs in six places in the Bokhari, and even though, on account of the careless wording of some reporters, some confusion has occurred in some of them between Me'raj and Isra, still with regard to Me'raj there is not a single report speaking of the Holy Prophet having been taken to Jerusalem therein ; whereas all of them are unanimous in saying that in Me'raj the Holy Prophet was taken up into the heavens from Mecca.

When we turn to books of history and biography we are forced to the same conclusion. Ibni Hisham mentions Me'raj and Isra separately, and therein we read clearly stated that on the completion of Isra the Holy Prophet returned to Mecca, and that Me'raj took place separately.[2] The famous historian Ibni Saad, too, mentions the two separately giving different dates in the case of each.

In the face of this overwhelming evidence, the conclusion is inevitable that Me'raj and Isra are two separate events, not one and the same journey, nor two parts of one. Many of the later scholars, too, have concurred in this view.[3]

The second mistake made in connection with Me'raj and Isra is that the two journeys have popularly been taken to have been made by the Holy Prophet with his physical body, whereas the Quran, the Hadith and the books of history strongly reject this view. About Me'raj we read in the Quran : "What the heart (of the Holy Prophet) perceived was quite true, and his mind did not make any mistake in its comprehension

1. Bokhari.
2. Ibni Hisham, *Zikrul Isra.*
3. See Zurqani's *Discussion on Isra* ; and Khamis's *Zikrul Isra wal Me'raj.*

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which all his four sons had set their hearts. The old man took from his store three imitation jewels of the same colour and size and got the four stones mixed. Then he called his sons one by one in great secrecy, and handed over to each a stone without looking at it. He told each of them that he was his dearest son and to him alone he gave the genuine stone, and only counterfeits to the others so that they might not quarrel over its possession after his death, and the old man enjoined strict secrecy of this affair on each of his sons. As soon as the old man closed his eyes every one of his sons boasted of the possession of the genuine stone, and declared those in possession of his brothers only counterfeits; because did not the father whisper it to him alone in secrecy? "So your Majesty," submitted the *baniya*, "we shall have to wait till the Day of Judgment to get a reply to your question, when you and I shall confront the Creator Who gave us what we possess." All the religious wrangles of the world appear to the historian not more sensible than the quarrel among the sons of the old man of the parable. The Prophet himself in one of his sayings is said to have made a prophecy to the effect that 73 sects shall arise in Islam to disturb the unity of his followers till one among them will rise to restore the Faith to its pristine purity and make it triumphant by bringing back the solidarity of his *Ummat*. There exist today perhaps more than 73 sects, and more than one among the followers of the Prophet claimed to be the destined *Imam Mahdi*,[1] and yet the promised thing has not yet happened. One Muslim writer rightly contends that if it was the Will of God to send a Messenger to abolish idol-worship or to reform social vices, private morals and religious cults, He ought to have sent Mohammad in the seventh century not to Arabia but to India. The Prophet appeared among the Arabs not merely to effect these reforms but to build up a united and powerful nation out of a mass of warring tribes and communities, to

1. There are many in these days who claim to be reformers of one kind or another, but only one claimant to the position of the Mahdi—*Editor*.

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furnish them with a single national purpose and to start them on an undreamt of political career of glory. *If so, no country, in the world stands in greater need of a prophet than the India of today. If the Prophet has not already been sent to us we need him sorely at this moment of our crisis in national life.* (Italics ours.) But we should make our position and our prayer clear lest God should misunderstand us. We want not the promised *Imam Mahdi* of the orthodox Muslim imagination coming among us with the Quran in one hand and the unsparing sword in another to cut off the heads of the Hindu majority of this country, nor shall we welcome the promised tenth *Avatar*, *Kalki* girding up sword for the destruction of the *Malechchas* by which Hindus in their impotent dispair perhaps mean Muslims; because it would mean only the amputation of mighty arms of the Indian body-politic of today. It is perhaps dangerous to look up for a new prophet who may assume either of these two roles. So it is prudent to explore the possibilities of our profiting by the life and teachings of the Prophet of Arabia who has become almost domiciled in India A brief study of Hindu-Muslim relations and reforming movements in India will make it clear that " Inter-Communal" amity which we hope to promote was a movement that stirred the imagination of our people from at least the fourteenth century down to our own times.

During the reign of our good king Sultan Firoz Tughlaq God was remoured to have been born in the city of Delhi under the name of Ahmad Bahari. Hindus did not perhaps hail him as their God because he was to be born not in Delhi but in a Brahman family of U. P.; and Muslims were ashamed of the scandal that a Muslim should practise such an imposture. This God loaded with chains was sent to the royal prison where he possibly perished. About the same time and in the same city a Mahdi also appeared under the name of Rukn-ud-Din who with his followers was put to death by the orthodox section; and a third reformer appeared in Gujrat and like Mansur

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cried *An al-haq* "I am the Truth." In the next century the blessed saint Kabir preached the folly of imagining one God for the Hindus and another for Mohammadans and told our people that Ram and Rahim were one and the same. Though his followers were denounced as Hinduised Muslims, his movement was a considerable success. He tried to make the Hindus more acceptable to their Muslim neighbours by inducing them to give up idol-worship, touchism and senseless and elaborate rituals meant only to deceive the ignorant. Nanak attempted the same thing in the Punjab, denouncing the Vedas and the Quran and calling upon both Hindus and Muslims to follow a religion of heart and not of the intellect. But its outcome in the long run was neither religious unity nor inter-communal amity but rise of a new Hindu militant cult fanatically hostile to Islam as well as to orthodox Hinduism. Within the Muslim society Mahdist movement under Shaikh Abdullah and the Bengal saint Shaikh Alai began to prevail under Islam Shah who had to crush it much against his will. But the Movement nevertheless lingered on till the close of the millenium when Emperor Akbar gave it a new turn. Akbar became convinced of the fact, like the Founder of the Ahmadiyya movement, that there was truth in every religion though mingled with much untruth and irrationalism. Akbar made an attempt to bring together the intelligentsia of both communities on a common religious platform. With this object he founded the creed of Din-i-Ilahi, deriving his inspiration from the cult of ancient Iran, and different schools of Hinduism. But in the plentitude of royal power he offended Muslim sentiments and the orthodox Muslims branded him as the Dajjal after whom his grandson Shahjahan was hailed as the Mahdi of his age. Shahjahan's son Dara Shikoh devoted his whole life, energy and resources to creating a school of pantheistic Sufi theosophy with a view to unite the Elect of Hinduism and Islam which he compared to two locks of hair (*zulf*) on the Countenance of God. After him Aurangzeb experimented with the policy of submerging one community into another with fatal results to himself and his empire.

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The Hindus, driven to bay all of a sudden, appeared invincible and even took the aggressive. The ebb of the fortune of Islam, though arrested for a while by the Ruhelas with the powerful support of Ahmad Shah Durrani, continued and sunk to the lowest point during the Sikh ascendency. The Muslims made the *Jihad* of Haidari Jhanda against the Sikhs and the orthodox Hindus also joined hands with the Muslims. But when the *Jihad* failed against the common enemy the Muslims consoled themselves by plundering their erst-while allies, the Hindu inhabitants of Lahore. This spirit of *jihad* now spread among the Sikhs. The Sikhs who had come to pay their respects to Emperor Shah Alam, II at Delhi celebrated their Duserah by destroy-ing a mosque in the neighbourhood of the Mughal Capital.

This sickening record of bitter fanaticism is broken only by the activities of the Hindu and Muslim mystics of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, such as Pran Nath of Panna, Mirza Jan-i-Janan, Rajjabji, Din Darwesh. The last-named mystic says :—

هنود کہے سو ہم بڑے مسلمان کہے ہم
ایک منگ کی دو فاڑ ہے کون زیادہ کون کم
کون زیادہ کون کم کرنا نہیں کچیا
ایک بھگت ہو رام دوجو رحمان سے رضیا
کہے دین درویش دوئ سریتہ مل سندھو
سید صاحب ایک ایک مسلمان ہندو

In the nineteenth century Rajah Ram Mohan Roy sought to bring a rapprochement between the Hindus and Musalmans on cultural and spiritual basis by found-ing Brahmo-Samaj. The theosophical movement under Christian influence also began to work in the same direction in this century. But neither mysticism nor literary propaganda could achieve this inter-communal amity. With the rise of Arya Samaj relations became further strained, and Hinduism which had been a non-missionary religion took to missionary

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work with feverish zeal. In our own times politicians thought that they could achieve communal unity by uniting in common opposition to the British Government and the *Khilafat* agitation was utilized for this purpose. For a couple of months India wore a spectacle of unity which one may sigh for again. But the clash of interest separated the two communities in the political arena. Though politics have failed, politicians, each his own way, seek to accomplish it. The *jihad* spirit is again abroad. One Muslim speaker declared that only a little sacrifice on the part of Congress would solve the difficulty, namely, that its leaders should read the 'Kalima' or Muslim confession of faith. But Hindus are not barbarian Germanic tribes to become converts if only the leader would go over to a new faith. The problem will not be solved even if Nehru or Gandhi accepts Islam; they will simply, be regretted as withered leaves of the Hindu *Akhshay-bata*. Such being the situation what is the best way to bring about inter-communal amity?

This is one of the most important problems that agitated the mind of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian. I would request every Hindu to read carefully his great book *The Teachings of Islam*. He discussed the problem also in his *Message of Peace*. His demands on the Hindus, I should say, are very moderate :—

He required the Hindus to sign a pact in which the condition is: "We believe in Muhammad Mustafa..... and regard him as a true Prophet. We will always speak of him as respectfully as a sincere believer should". (Page 17, *Message of Peace*.)

I may only say that Hindus gave a place to Allah in one of their Upanishads in the sixteenth century, *and in the 20th century I can dare say that except perhaps some people of perverted mentality all the Hindus have a genuine faith in Mohammad as one of the prophets of God and benefactors of mankind. I resent no less than a Mohammadan the unworthy attack on*

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the Prophet by H. G. Wells. As Islam comes to us with an orientation I only hope that it will fulfil its mission of bringing peace to the world through the efforts of the enlightened section of the Community—the Ahmadiyyas.

But it is with the proviso that thereby they will not be expected to abjure their own creed. The difficulty of it lies in the fact that it requires not so much the enlightenment of Hindu opinion as of the Muslims. Let us hope that a time will come when the members of the same family will perform idol-worship as well as offer Namaz or Christian prayer in perfect peace and amity as the Hindus of ancient days followed each his own cult, Brahmanism or Buddhism, with unperturbed peace of mind. The Prophet conceived of the whole community of the faithful as one great joint family and he exactly defined the rights and duties of each.

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REVIEWS

An introduction to the study of Christianity *by Frank Dodd, George Allen and Unwin, 12s. 6d. net.*

BOOKS on Christianity, as on all other subjects, pour out of the press every year at such a rapid rate that one is left wondering how they fare after they leave the premises where they are sold. Most of them sell well, on which point there is not much room for doubt as otherwise they would cease to be produced—of which tendency there seem to be no indications at present. What is not so clear, however, is : what percentage of buyers takes the trouble to read them through and, out of these, how many read them with attention enough to digest the contents.

Although no statistics are available bearing on the point, it is safe to assume that a goodly number of them, at any rate, are studied with due care as there are signs that some books create ripples in the religious thought of people which not only widen in a circle round the point of origin, as all ripples do, but have an additional knack of renewing themselves at various points by causing explosions, so to say, through their impact upon jerms of thought lying concealed along their route of progress.

Of course only those books fall into this category which are not written merely because the writer feels an itch to write something—to be in the fashion, more or less : such books, are those which get written because some people arrive at certain conclusions after careful and systematic study—conclusions which they feel they would fail in their duty to humanity if they did nothing to pass them on to mankind.

To this category, undoubtedly, belongs *An introduction to the study of Christianity.* The subject which forms the theme of this book is of vital importance to those who hold that the real and supreme value of man's life lies not so much in the range and quality of the material comforts enjoyed as in success or failure to find an answer to the question which confronts every intelligent man : "What is the goal of

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Human Life? and how can man attain to that goal?" Christianity represents one answer, the answer, that is, which Jesus Christ gave to this question. But Jesus lived and taught nearly two thousand years ago, and his teachings have come down to us through channels concerning which it behoves us to decide how far they can be relied upon in point of faithful transmission of what was poured into them.

Frank Dodd's book differs from most others which appear on this subject from time to time—books which are written for the specific purpose either of defending Christianity or of tearing it to pieces. The treatise under review does neither. "While assuming no pre-existing sympathy on the part of the reader" it "aims at opening up a line of thought likely to lead him to the acceptance of what is really essential in the Christian faith."

Out of modesty or some delicacy of feeling the writer does not call his study a search for truth. There are so many who assume that pose while in reality they are no more than self-seekers or partisan propagandists that many who strain every nerve in their brain and body to reach out for Truth, shrink, nevertheless, from calling themselves or being called by the name that best describes their frame of mind. *An Introduction to the Study of Christianity*, at any rate, is characterised by a spirit of inquiry that declines to recognise any loyalty or obligation to ideas and modes of thought, no matter how old or well established, should they exhibit signs of weakness under the strain of an adequate text. It aims "first at setting forward very briefly the basic fact anent the genesis of Christianity, and subsequently at calling attention to the interpretations which successive generations of Christians have placed on such facts," believing "that this course is likely to render Christianity and its basic doctrines more credible than is the method which, owing to obvious circumstances, teachers of elemental theology find themselves obliged to adopt when imparting instruction to the young."

This has naturally resulted in an appraisal of the foundation on which traditional Church Christianity is built—*i.e.*, the New Testament—and an analysis of those fundamental concepts which go to form its body of doctrine and belief.

Dr. Dodd disclaims any intention to attack Church Christianity and on going through his book one finds no trace

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of such intention. His findings, nevertheless, constitute an attack more deadly for that very reason. "In other words", he is forced to write, "it is impossible on reading any particular passage of the New Testament to assert with entire certainty that such passage is genuine". From a study with regard to authorship the four Gospels, the Acts and the Epistles emerge badly torn and mangled. The expressions "Son of God" and "Son of Man" conveyed impressions to the earliest Christians which do not warrant the interpretation that later came to be placed on them. This interpretation and ideas concerning the Godhead of Jesus and the Holy Trinity are the direct result of pagan influences. While discussing Jn. 10 : 35, 36 Dr. Dodd writes :—

"Now a critic may possibly be sceptical as to whether Jesus actually used the words here attributed to him. The Synoptic evangelists do not represent him as calling himself Son of God and we find that he charged his immediate disciples to keep secret the fact that he had claim to the title (Matt. 16 : 16 20). And although the author of the fourth Gospel puts the words above quoted into the mouth of Jesus we do not attach to the fact the importance that we might otherwise do, seeing that, as we have already seen, this author probably rather laid himself out to indicate the more re-condite truths of Christianity than to reproduce with verbal accuracy exactly what he had heard Jesus say. Consequently we cannot be certain that the words above quoted were actually used by Jesus in his discussion with the Jews, but nevertheless we at least know that they represent the opinion of that writer who is most frequently appealed to in support of the traditional doctrine of the nature of Jesus. And it is quite clear that this opinion is that the reason why Jesus could claim to be Son of God was that the Father God sanctified him and sent him into the world.

"And in harmony with the foregoing we find that Paul seems to apply the title Son of God to any man enhanced with the Christ Spirit. 'As many are led by the Spirit of God they are the Sons of God, (Rom. 8 : 14). The expression in the fourth Gospel (1 : 12). "He gave power to become the Sons of God' would appear to have a similar meaning but in other places the same phrase probably means simply what in more modern English we would call a godly man."

With regard to the nature and Mission of Jesus the Words of Peter (Acts II) are clear and leave no doubt as to the opinion

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of the immediate disciples on the point. "It will be observed that Peter gives no hint of regarding him as a Secondary Deity, existing co-eternally with God. On the contrary Peter speaks of 'Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God', who for certain reasons which seemed sufficient to the divine mind, was made by God both Lord and Christ. The natural interpretation of Peter's words is that although Jesus of Nazareth may doubtless have been foreordained to his exalted mission, nevertheless he was actually born into the world as a human being, and that this human being was at some period subsequent to his birth made by God both Lord and Christ. This is entirely consistent with what would appear to be the belief of the evangelists that Jesus became the Christ at the time of his baptism."

What strikes at the very root of the structure we know as the traditional Church Christianity is the fact of "the absence of any decisive indication that Jesus meant to found a visible permanent Organisation." Dr. Dodd concurs with Dean Inge who says:—

"There is no evidence that the Historical Christ ever intended to found a new institutional religion. He neither attempted to make a schism in the Jewish Church, nor to substitute a new system for it.....Institutional Christianity may be a legitimate and necessary historical development from the original Gospel, but it is something alien to the Gospel itself" (*The Indictment against Christianity*).

The difficulty presented by the moral teachings of Jesus is no less obvious—the Sermon on the Mount in Mt. and Lk. 6 : 29. The attitude of Jesus (and Paul) on sex relationship is something which those Christian missionaries would do well to study with care who never tire of condemning Islam on the alleged ground that it inculcates ideas into the Muslim mind which are degrading for the female sex. "But the teaching of both Jesus (*e.g.* Matt. 19 : 10—12) and Paul (*e.g.*, 1 Cor. 7 : 7—9) lends itself to the interpretation that physical relationship between the sexes are of an essentially sinful nature and that the higher, life demands rigid continence from the disciple."

With regard to ideas such as atonement through the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, his divine nature and his Godhead, Son of God and Trinity, etc., the fact of the matter

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of the sights it had witnessed."[1] These words are plain as plain can be that the journey was a matter of spiritual and mental vision, not a physical trip made with the physical body. Similarly in the Hadith, too, there is clear indication that the Me'raj was a spiritual vision. In one report words are found to the effect that at the time when the Holy Prophet was being shown the sights of the heavens, his body was asleep in his bed, though it is mentioned that this sleep was not the ordinary sleep of human beings in which our senses and perceptions become dormant.[2] In another report, which incidentally serves to explain the one just referred to, it is mentioned that the Holy Prophet had this experience in a unique bodily and physical state which was neither sleeping nor waking, but a peculiar condition half way between the two. In a third report the words occur that at the end of this experience the Holy Prophet woke up; while, there is yet another in which Hazrat Aesha says that should any one assert that during Me'raj the Holy Prophet saw Almighty God with his physical eyes, he would be saying what is not true, and that such a view should in no case be accepted. In works of biography, too, the same view seems to prevail. Ibn Ishaq says that on the night when Me'raj took place, the Holy Prophet's body did not disappear, remaining in the physical world all through.

With regard to Isra, also, it is abundantly clear that it was a matter of spiritual vision of which the experience was vouchsafed to the Holy Prophet for certain specific spiritual advantages calculated to accrue from it. The Quran mentions three particulars in connection with Isra: (1) that it occurred at night time; (2) that it was completed in the course of a single night as the word occurring in connection with it is "Lailan", which means one night; and (3) that the aim in view in vouchsafing this experience to the Holy Prophet was to make him witness certain signs, *i.e.*

1. *Surah Najm, ruku 1.*
2. Bokhari, *Abwab Siftul Nabi.*

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seems to be that they found their way into Christianity from pagan cults flourishing at that time through a mistake on the part of early Christian Missionaries in the method they adopted to make their message intelligible to the Pagans when they began to address them. For the sake of convenience, and because it yielded speedy results, they probably took to expressing the concepts of Christianity in terms with the connotation and meaning of which their audiences were familiar as they were borrowed from their own religious terminology. When presented in this way, the Christian Message was easily and speedily grasped, causing, in due course, a great influx of converts from the Pagan cults. Through the passage of time, however, the original meaning of the borrowed modes of thought reasserted itself and gained sway over the mind. The treatise under review does indeed give a hint in this direction, but the point is well worth fuller study.

The book, in short, is of surpassing value and interest. It reveals the inner core on all questions of importance with regard to Christian doctrines, being of such absorbing interests that a review of it has a tendency to lengthen itself into quite a volume on its own. But for the rest we content ourselves with saying that it can safely be expected to lead its readers to the "acceptance of what is really essential in the Christian Faith."

By the way it may here be remarked that, in Dr. Dodds study, what rises to the surface as the real essentials of the religion bought by Jesus closely approximates to the Quranic representation of the teachings of the 'Son of Mary'.

USEFUL RELIGIOUS LITERATURE

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signs of the glory of God and the way in which the Divine Purpose was going to fulfil itself. When we ponder deeply over these particulars we are forced to the conclusion that it was a spiritual experience, rather than a physical one. For, in the first place, the time for physical journeys, generally speaking, is the day as journeys are undertaken at night only under exceptional circumstances. For spiritual visions, on the other hand, the usual time is the quiet time of night. The fact that Isra took place during night time, indicates that it was a spiritual expereince. Secondly, the circumstance that the journey is expressly stated to have been completed in a single night, can have only one significance—that of implying that it was not a journey made with the physical body but a spiritual experience gone through with the inner perceptions. A physical journey from Mecca to Jerusalem and back was impossible in the course of one night, means of transport being what they were at the time. Thirdly, the purpose for which the experience was vouchsafed to the Prophet, namely that of showing him signs, this, too, leads us to the same conclusion.

A physical journey to Jerusalem and back to Mecca, even though completed in the short time of one night, no matter how surprising and unusual on that account, can hardly be taken to involve or imply any illustration of spiritual truth by witnessing which even a Prophet could derive benefit. On the other hand, should the experience be taken to have been of the nature of a spiritual vision, giving to the Prophet a glimpse of the earthly and spiritual progress ordained for him and his followers, then, indeed, it becomes an experience from which not only the Prophet alone was to benefit, but all his followers as well, by witnessing the fulfilment of the grand prophecies implied in the vision.

Above all the Quran uses the word "Roya" in connection with Isra. Roya in Arabic means vision.[1]

1. *Surah Bani Israil, ruku 6.*

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After clearing this basic misunderstanding we now proceed to state briefly the particulars mentioned in the Scriptures with regard to Me'raj and Isra. In the Holy Quran Me'raj is mentioned in the following words:

"The Lord of strength; so he attained completion, and He is in the highest part of the Horizon Then He drew near, then He became lowly, So He was the measure of two bows or closer still. And He revealed to the servant what He revealed. The heart did not make a mistake in what it saw. Do you then dispute with him as to what he saw. And certainly he saw Him in another descent, at the farthest Lote-tree, near which is the garden, the place to be resorted to. When that which covered, covered the lote-tree. The eye did not turn aside, nor did it exceed the limit. Certainly he saw of the greatest signs of his Lord."[1]

Amplification of this Brief Description

The reports of Hadith, which occur in amplification and explanation of the above, differ from each other, unfortunately; and the less reliable the report according to the canons of narration, the fuller it is of unwarranted material. We will, therefore, give here a gist of the authentic and reliable reports only.

One night the Holy Prophet was lying in that part of the Kaaba which is called Hatim; and he was in a state which is neither exactly wakefulness nor sleep when Gabriel appeared before him. The Angel requested him to get up, and taking him to the spring of Zamzam, he opened the Holy Prophet's chest, taking his heart out and washing it with the pure water of that sacred spring. Then a dish full of "Faith" and "Wisdom" was brought, the contents of which were filled into the Holy Prophet's heart, which was then replaced in his chest. Then the Angel led the Holy Prophet high up into the heavens. When

1. *Sura Najm, ruku 1.*

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the two reached the gate of the first sky, the Angel knocked and a voice asked from inside: "who is it?" Gabriel answered that it was he, and that he was accompanied by the Holy Prophet. The voice then asked: "Has the Holy Prophet been sent for?" and Gabriel replied that it was so. The gatekeeper then opened the door and welcomed the Holy Prophet. On entering the Holy Prophet saw a venerable old man who greeted him in the following words: "You are welcome O righteous Prophet and righteous son!" and the Holy Prophet returned his greetings. To the right and left of this venerable old man could be seen the shadow of innumerable souls. When he looked towards his right, his face glowed with pleasure; but when he looked towards the left, he turned pale with grief. The Holy Prophet asked Gabriel as to who this venerable old man was, and Gabriel answered that he was Adam; that on his right hand was the shadow of such of his progeny as were in Heaven, while to his left was the shadow of those who were suffering in the fires of Hell. Then Gabriel guided the Holy Prophet higher up until the two came to another gate which, too, was opened after the same questions as before had been asked and answered. On entering this time, the Holy Prophet saw two men who greeted him in the following words: "welcome, O Prophet and righteous brother!" The Holy Prophet returned their greetings and asked Gabriel who they were, being informed that they were Jesus and John. In like manner Gabriel guided the Holy Prophet to the fourth and fifth sky where he met Joseph and Idris and Haroon respectively; and in the sixth sky he met Moses in like manner. Then, as the Holy Prophet was about to proceed, Moses wept; and a voice was heard asking him the cause of his grief, whereupon Moses answered pointing to the Holy Prophet: "O God! this young man came after me, but his followers will merit paradise in larger numbers than mine; and I had never imagined that any one coming after me would leave me behind." After this the Holy Prophet proceeded to the seventh sky, where he met

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Prophet Abraham whom he found sitting reclining against the Bait-e-Ma'mur (the Hall of Worship in the Heavens, of which the sacred Kaaba in Mecca is, so to say, the prototype). Hazrat Abraham, too, greeted the Holy Prophet in the same manner as Hazrat Adam had done, he too being the ancestor of the Holy Prophet.

Then the Holy Prophet was taken higher still until a point was reached where no human being had ever been before. Here a sound was to be heard as of the scratching of innumerable pens (of Divine Decree). Next, the Holy Prophet saw before him a tree which resembled a tree common in many countries upon which a kind of berries grow. This tree represented the last point for affairs of the earth, and beyond it was the Paradise of everlasting Bliss. The leaves and the fruit growing on this tree were unusually big and of a peculiar kind. As the Holy Prophet stood looking at this tree, a great, indescribable Light descended upon it, with regard to which the exact expression used by the Holy Prophet is: "Words have not the power to describe it." Under that tree there were four rivers flowing. Gabriel informed the Holy Prophet that two out of these represented two earthly rivers, the Nile and the Euphrates, while the other two were of spiritual nature, flowing towards Paradise. At this point, moreover, Gabriel appeared to the Holy Prophet in his own original shape and form, and the Holy Prophet perceived that he had six hundred wings. Then the Holy Prophet was conducted over Paradise, finding himself presented in audience, finally, before Almighty God Himself. And there God spoke to him directly, without any intermediary, giving him many glad tidings of exceeding great joy, the Holy Prophet also being informed that it was decreed that the Muslims should offer their prayers (Slat) 50 times every 24 hours.

On his way back, the Holy Prophet again met Hazrat Moses, who asked what decrees the Holy Prophet had received; and when he heard that fifty

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prayers had been made obligatory to be said every day, he started and, from his own experience of the Israelites, remarked that the Muslims would not be able to carry out this commandment, advising that the Holy Prophet should beg the number to be decreased. The Holy Prophet then returned, and upon supplication from him ten prayers a day were taken off, forty being left. But Hazrat Moses considered this also to be too much; and the Holy Prophet acting upon his advice a number of times, the daily prayers were finally fixed at 5. Even then Hazrat Moses thought the number to be more than was likely to be carried out faithfully, but the Holy Prophet refused to seek any further reduction thereof, saying that he now felt ashamed to do so. A voice was then heard saying: "The prayers are five, but they would be as fifty in Our sight, as We shall give a ten-fold reward for each." After that the Holy Prophet descended to this earth, and he woke up, finding himself lying in the sacred Mosque as before.[1]

In some reports concerning Me'raj, a mount, somewhat like a horse, called the "Buraq" is mentioned, the Holy Prophet riding upon it when he ascended; also two or three cups of milk or wine, etc., having been presented before him. But careful study reveals that these incidents are connected with Isra,[1] the confusion having occurred on account of carelessness on the part of some reporters.

Isra

The word Isra in Arabic means to transport some one at night from one place to another. This spiritual journey took place at night, and hence its name. The Holy Quran mentions this incident in the following words: "Hallowed is He who transported His servant at night from the "Masjid-e-Haram" (Kaaba at Mecca) to the "Masjid Aqsa" (sacred Temple of Jerusalem) of which we have blessed the surroundings,

1. Zurqani.